3: Pijoan D-5 (ca. 1945) 1946
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TOOLS

Before the conquest the Miskito had very few tools and as has been pointed out by Conzemius[1] these Indians were living in a wood age rather than a stone age. Today the common tools in use are noted in the order of their importance. The machete *(ispara)*, a heavy knife varying from one to two feet in length is the most commonly used tool. It can be used for almost any purpose from clearing bush to ligging postholes. It can also be used as a weapon of defense as well as for cutting and slicing food. Second to the machete is the ax *(asa)* which is used for chopping trees and preparing timber. These axes are made of metal and stone *(alwani mahbra)*. Adzes *(ats)* are today in common use for the making of boats and other objects of wood. With the exception of the stone ax both the machete and the adze are of post Colombian origin.[1] Hoes have been introduced in the last century and these are used primarily for clearing weeds. A variety of knives *(skiro, kisuro)* are seen in all households and used not only to cut with for eating purposes as well.

DIVISION OF WORK

The husband prepares the patch of forest for the plantation. He cuts down the trees and clears the ground by fire. However, the major part of planting, weeding, and taking in the crop is left to the wife. The manufacture of hunting and fishing implements is the man's job. Fishing, however, is carried out by both men and women. The building of canoes is the man's work although women sometimes assist him in this arduous work. Men will cut trees for firewood but the women have to fetch the lengths of timber cut by the men.

It is customary for women to carry heavy loads but the men occasionally do. Heavy loads are placed on the back by the use of a carrying strap (*bombador*). Many of the women carry loads on their heads.

All the domestic industries such as weaving, spinning, cooking, etc., are female occupations. Tailoring, however, is shared by both the men and the women. The barbecuing of the chase is the only cooking men indulge in.

FUNCTIONAL ENTERPRISE

Interchange of commodities is commonly effected by barter but today there is an ever increasing use of currency (córdoba). Trading is carried out with traders and the Indians in many instances exchange

I: Conzemius M-4, 5 (1921) 1932
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DIVISION OF LABOR

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DOMESTIC WORK.—Such domestic industries as spinning, weaving, and the manufacture of pottery, bark cloth, and bead ornaments are female occupations. Tailoring is, however, frequently in the hands of the men, some of whom even make the clothes for their wives. The preparation of food is strictly reserved to the women, the men never condescending to do any cooking, except while away from home. The barbecuing of the chase is, however, the work of the men.

FIELDS.—The husband prepares a patch of the forest for the making of a plantation, by cutting down the trees and cleaning the ground by burning; but the care of the field, that is the planting, weeding, and reaping of the crop, is left to the women.

OTHER OUTSIDE OCCUPATIONS.—The manufacture of fishing and hunting implements, and of canoes and accessories thereto, are man's work. The women fish with the hook, but all other methods of fishing are reserved to the men. The latter fell trees for firewood and cut them into convenient lengths to haul, but the females have to fetch and split it. The woman goes to the waterside to bring the game which her husband has killed and brought in his canoe, but she never accompanies him on the actual hunt, being unacquainted with the handling of hunting weapons.

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LOAD CARRYING.—The carrying of heavy loads is usually left to the women. For this purpose they use a carrying strap, known by the local Spanish name "bombador" or "bambador." The latter consists of a narrow strip of bark cloth, both extremities of which are attached to the burden. The load is first lifted on the back with the assistance of another person and then the pack strap is put around the forehead. The male Indians do not carry anything in this manner, but they secure the package to the back with the aid of shoulder straps, as do the Ladinos. The Spanish-speaking women, however, carry loads generally upon the head, as is the case with the negroes of both sexes. When very tired the Indians give a sort of whistle to catch their breath (M.: *wiñka puhbaya;* T. & P.: *wiñka urupdanin;* U.: *wiñka urupdanaka*, lit.: "to blow the breath").

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DAY LABOR WORK.—In former days many young Miskito, living to the west of Cabo Gracias a Dios, went annually to British Honduras to work there in the mahogany or logwood camps. They left about May and returned in November or December. During this time the settlements on the coast were practically without male inhabitants, except for the boys and old men. The women then had to subsist on fish, crabs, oysters, cockles, the eggs of alligators, turtles, and iguanas, and vegetable food. Now all these Indians easily find work in their own country, either in the mahogany camps or in the

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1: Conzemius M-4, 5 (1921) 1932
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323 the neighborhood of the hut, where it is left to burn slowly, until all the wood and coals have been consumed. Neither paint, glaze, nor plastic ornamentation is applied nowadays.

ANCIENT POTTERY VESSELS.—The pottery objects found in many 323 parts of the Mosquito Coast, chiefly in old burial grounds, indicate 172 a much greater skill in this art than that possessed by the present- 531 day inhabitants of the country. Most of such ware is unpainted, but fine plastic ornamentation was applied to the knob handles and occasionally to the legs also. The designs represent chiefly heads of jaguars, alligators, turtles, and birds. Fragments of tripod vessels with legs modified into animal legs may also be found; sometimes these legs are hollow and contain clay balls as rattlers. In the shell mounds or kitchen middens near the sea fragments of pottery vessels with figurine handles have been discovered. A geometric motive, which is often found on old pottery vessels and on stonework, is the incised guilloche or rope pattern, which may have a curvilinear or an angular construction.

ANCIENT CLAY MASKS.—From the interior of the Mosquito Coast, 172 probably the Sumu territory, the discovery of human heads, busts or 532 entire figures, made of clay, has been reported. The material used for this purpose is said to have been mixed occasionally with gold dust. These objects are supposed to be the likenesses of chiefs or other prominent persons who had been buried at the spots where these finds were made. A number of these "masks" were brought to England from the interior of the Mosquito Coast about the year 1775, and eight of them have been described and depicted by Rogers (107). As these masks have their backs concaved in a cylindrical form, they were probably parts of sepulchral urns.

COTTON TEXTILES

248 CULTIVATION OF COTTON.—The art of weaving has not been mastered by the young generation, but cotton (*Gossypium* sp.; M.: *wahmuk;* S.: *wahmak*) is still cultivated in a desultory way. The bushes, which attain a height of from 8 to 12 feet, may be found in the neighborhood of almost every hut; they flower the whole year round, and at any time buds and open bolls may be found on the same plant.

A FEMALE OCCUPATION.—Dyeing and spinning cotton and weaving 286 it into cloth is exclusively woman's work. Exquemelin (Fr. edit.: 462 II, 269), who wrote during the second half of the seventeenth century, states that the women only spin the cotton and that the men do the weaving.

TYPES OF FABRICS.—The elder Sumu women still weave cotton 286 into loin cloths (M.: *palpura;* T. and P.: *dŏh;* U.: *ani*), girdles or